airlink 41 new stations in its immediate phase of expansion. With a view to augment its fleet Vayudoot is evaluating various forty seater aircraft available in the market.

There are, however, no plans to change the status of Vayudoot to an independent company.

Sub-standard medicines in the Unani Dispensaries of C.G.H.S.

495. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the shortage of medicines in C.G.H.S. Unani Dispensaries and supply of sub-standard medicines to patients through such dispensaries;

(b) whether it is a fact that order for supply of medicines goes much to the small companies in comparison to reputed companies, if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government do not have any machinery to test quality of the medicines before they are purchased and after they are received in the C G.H.S. Stores in bulk before distribution to the patients;

(d) whether Government propose to set up any machinery to ensure adequate supply of standard medicines and from reputed firms like Hamdard etc. in future, who do not indulge into malpractices while making Government supplies; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): (a) to (e) There is no shortage of medicines and no sub-standard drug has been detected in C.G.H.S. Unani dispensaries.

The purchase of Unani medicines is made on the recommendations of the Purchase Advisory Committee which genrally accepts the lowest offer confirming to the specifications irrespective of the status of the company. The organoliptic test method is followed by the Purchase Advisory Committee before purchasing the medicines and accepting the supplies.

Private courier service

496. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Private Courier Service is running parallel to Indian Postal Service both for carrying letters within the country and as also for foreign countries;

(b) how many such Indian companies are operating in India, and nature of control the Government exercise over these companies with regard to their tariff, security etc.;

(c) whether these companies are cutting into the revenue of the Indian Postal Services;

(d) whether instances have come to light, about the misuse of the service for unethical purposes like smuggling etc.; and

(e) whether similar foreign courier service companies are operating in India and if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) It is a fact that Private Courier Services are being run in India. However, they cannot run parallel services to the Indian Postal Service for carrying letters within the country in as much as carrying of letters is the monopoly of the Government of India under Indian Post Office Act. As regards letter mail for foreign countries, since incidental services like collection and despatch are involved within India the provision of the Indian Post Office Act are attracted, if the letter mail are booked by Private Couriers.

(b) This Ministry has got no information regarding the number of Indian Courier Companies operating in India. This Ministry does not exercise any control over these companies regarding their tariff, security etc. The information is being collected from the Ministry of Finance.